



Managing Challenging Communication Policy

This document has been prepared to set out the Managing Challenging Communications Policy of Hanham Primary Federation. The document shall be reviewed annually and approved by the Local Governing Board for the school.

Document Control

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Document Information

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1. Rationale

At Hanham Primary Federation our values are 'be safe, be ready and be respectful' and we ask that all members of our school family act within these parameters, showing respect towards one another at all times. We strive to make our school a place where adults model to children the behaviour we teach and expect and place a high importance on good manners, empathetic communication and mutual respect.

On the very rare occasions where the behaviour of an adult, including parents/carers, falls short of what is acceptable in a school environment, our staff will respond swiftly and with professionalism to protect our school community and defuse the situation. This policy has been written taking into account the DfE guidance 'Controlling Access to School Premises' (2018).

2. Terms

In this policy, **communication** refers to the information shared between parties regardless of the manner in which that information was sent or received.

Social media refers to online platforms that facilitate communication that can be shared or seen by more than two parties such as;

- WhatsApp
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter
- ClassDojo

We are one entity under a single leadership structure across Hanham Abbots Juniors and Samuel White's Infants therefore **Federation** will be interchangeable with **school**.

The terms **SLT** and **FLT** refer to Senior Leadership team (Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Assistant Headteachers) and Federation Leadership Team (a wider group of leaders consisting of Phase Leads and Raising Standards Leads). The Federation Leadership Team sits underneath the Senior Leadership Team.

The Federation is officially two separate legal entities with a specific URN (Unique reference number) and DfE (Department for Education) number, along with two different OFSTED registrations. Therefore we require two separate records (our provider is Arbor). This means that children in different schools that are part of the same family will receive two separate comms about the same event. This may seem a duplication but is necessary to adhere to our legal requirements.

3. Definition of Unacceptable Behaviour

DfE guidance states: *"A school may consider that aggressive, abusive or insulting behaviour, or language from a parent presents a risk to staff or pupils. It is enough for a member of staff or a pupil to feel threatened."*

At Hanham Primary Federation, we recognise and adhere to this definition. Behaviour that makes a member of staff or child feel threatened either through face-to-face contact, on the telephone or in written communication (including social media) is considered unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

The following is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour:

- any kind of insult as an attempt to demean, embarrass or undermine
- any kind of threat
- raising of voice in an aggressive or intimidating manner so as to be intimidating
- physical intimidation, e.g. by encroaching on somebody's personal space or the use of aggressive hand gestures
- use of foul or abusive language

- any kind of physical abuse
- allegations which turn out to be vexatious or malicious

In these situations, we expect members of staff to behave professionally, attempting to defuse the situation where possible and seeking the involvement, as appropriate, of the Federation or Senior Leadership. Staff who face these situations have licence to end any conversation (face-to-face or on the telephone) following a verbal warning. They should then refer the incident to a senior leader who will take appropriate action or invoke the provisions of this policy.

4. Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Clearly set out the standard of behaviour expected on the school site and in interactions with school staff and children
- Safeguard all children and adults against abuse, both physically and verbally and both directly and indirectly, including protecting the dignity and reputation of children and adults.
- Provide a clear and codified framework for the school's response to unacceptable behaviour from adults, including incidents between parents/carers whilst in the school grounds.

5. Recording of Incidents

Staff or children subject to abuse and witnesses will make written statements about incident(s) [Appendix 1] which will be kept in a file with subsequent letters. This file will be kept by the Headteacher. Depending on an assessment of the risk of retaliation to witnesses or individuals, (anonymised) statements made by adults may be made available to the other party if they request it. Governors meet termly and the number of incidents are discussed. The nature of the incidents are not shared to allow impartiality should incidents be raised to the level of a formal complaint.

6. Risk Assessment

If a member of our school community behaves in an unacceptable way towards another person, the Headteacher or appropriate senior staff will assess the level of risk before deciding on a course of action.

Any actions taken will be reasonable and appropriate to the assessed level of risk. The impact to children and well-being of children will be fully considered and actions taken against a parent or carer will be proportionate. The other party will have the opportunity to put their views forward at every stage.

The Headteacher will consider the following questions:

- What form did the behaviour take?
- What evidence is there?
- What do witnesses say happened?
- Are there previous incidents to take into consideration?
- Do members of children feel intimidated by the behaviour?
- Is there any evidence of provocation?
- How high is the assessed risk that this will be repeated or there will be retaliation at the school's action?

7. A Staged Response

Following the completion of the risk assessment, the Headteacher will decide the level of action to be taken.

Stage 1. An informal meeting to discuss events and clarify expectations.

This could be helpful to discuss and defuse the situation. The safety and well-being of those attending such a meeting must be carefully considered. Members of school staff will always be accompanied by at least one other colleague at any such meeting. Consideration will be given to the seating arrangements, and care taken to ensure exits cannot be blocked by a person who could potentially become aggressive. The main points of discussion and any agreed actions will be noted, and a follow-up letter or email sent to confirm the school's expectations and any agreed actions.

Stage 2. Issue a warning about exhibited behaviour and clarify the standards of behaviour expected.

In some instances it may be appropriate to explain in writing that an exhibited behaviour is unacceptable, via a letter from the Headteacher [Appendix 2]. This letter may contain a warning about subsequent action if there are further incidents. The individual will be invited to respond to the Headteacher in writing within 10 working days. Depending on this response, a meeting may then be held to discuss the situation and how this can be avoided in future.

Stage 3. Impose conditions on contact with the school and its staff.

Although fulfilling a public function, schools are private properties and designated safe spaces. Members of the public have no automatic right of entry. Parents/carers of enrolled students have an 'implied licence' to come onto school premises at certain times. It is for schools to define and set out the extent of such access. Parents/carers exceeding this would be trespassing.

Depending on the type, level or frequency of the unacceptable behaviour, the Headteacher may consider imposing conditions on the person's contact with the school. These conditions may include:

- being accompanied to any meeting with a member of school staff by a member SLT
- restricting contact to telephone contact only with named members of SLT
- restricting contact to written communications only with named members of SLT
- restricting attendance at school events to those where the person will be accompanied by a member of SLT
- any other restriction as deemed reasonable and proportionate by the Headteacher

In this case the other party will be informed in writing of the details of the conditions that are being imposed [Appendix 3]. They have the right to make written representations to the Headteacher within 10 working days from the date of the letter. The Headteacher will decide whether to confirm or remove the conditions and will communicate this in writing [Appendix 4] within 10 working days of receipt of the letter of representation. When deciding whether it will be necessary to maintain, extend or remove the conditions, the Headteacher will give consideration to the extent of the person's compliance with the conditions, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct and any evidence of co-operation with the school in other respects.

In cases where conditions are imposed for a long period of time, the decision will be reviewed by the Governing Board after approximately six months (and every six months after that, if appropriate). The other party will be invited to make written representation to the Governors [Appendix 7] and this, and evidence from the Headteacher, will be considered. Governors may decide to maintain, extend or remove the conditions. If there is a complaint to Governors following a restriction to site, the procedures in this policy will take precedence over the Complaints Policy. The decision of the review will be communicated to all parties by the clerk to the governors within 10 days of the date of the meeting [Appendix 8].

Stage 4. Imposing a ban

Where other procedures have been exhausted and aggression or intimidation continues OR where there is a serious act of aggression or violence, the school may consider banning the individual from

the school premises. This may include banning communications with school staff by written communication or telephone.

Barring a person from a school is a serious action and will be taken on the basis of clear evidence. The length of the ban will be determined by the Headteacher and will be reasonable and proportionate to the behaviour exhibited. The barred party must have an opportunity to give their account of the circumstances before a decision is made.

In these circumstances, the other party will be advised in through the post that a provisional ban is being imposed by the Headteacher [Appendix 5]. They have the right to make written representations to the Headteacher within 10 working days from the date of the letter. The Headteacher will decide whether to confirm or revoke the ban and will communicate this in writing [Appendix 6] within 10 working days of the receipt of the letter of representation. When deciding whether to remove or extend the ban or impose conditions, the Headteacher will give consideration to the extent of the person's compliance with the ban, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct and any evidence of co-operation with the school in other respects.

The letter will address what arrangements the school will make for this child to be collected from and delivered to the parent at the school gate. If there are important meetings that the parent is required to attend, e.g. for the purpose of an EHCP/SEND plan, the practical arrangements for this will need to be considered.

The Leaf Trust should also be provided with a copy of any barring letter sent.

Any ban will be for as short a period as possible. On the very rare occasion that a decision to impose a long-term ban is taken, this will be reviewed by the Governing Board after approximately six months (and every six months after that, if appropriate). The other party will be invited to make written representation to the governors [Appendix 7]. This and the evidence from the Headteacher will be considered. Governors may decide to remove the ban, extend the ban or impose conditions on access to the school. The decision of the review will be communicated to all parties by the clerk to the governors within 10 days of the date of the meeting [Appendix 8].

8. Removal from School

Persons who have been banned from the school premises and continue to cause a nuisance will be deemed to have committed a section 547 offence. They will be considered as trespassers. In these circumstances they may be removed from school. This may be carried out by a police officer or person authorised by the governing body. Legal proceedings may be brought against the person.

9. Complaints Policy

Any complaints that arise from incidents of unacceptable behaviour will be dealt with under the complaints policy.

Appendix 1 – Incident report form and witness statements

This form should be completed as fully as possible. Separate witness statements will be required from staff/parents who witnessed an incident. Discussion between one witness and another should not take place, as this might lead to allegations of collusion.

Incident	Date of incident:	
	Time of incident:	
	Location of incident:	
Person reporting	Name of person reporting:	
	Relationship to school:	
	Position (if staff member):	
Details of victim	Name:	
	Relationship to school:	
	Relationship to other party:	
	Contact details:	
Details of individual displaying unacceptable behaviour	Name:	
	Relationship to school:	
	Relationship to victim:	
	Contact details:	
Details of witnesses	Name and contact details:	
	Name and contact details:	
	Name and contact details:	
	Name and contact details:	

Details of incident	
Type:	<i>if trespass, was the trespasser causing a nuisance or disturbance and how; if assault, give details of any injury suffered, treatment received etc</i>
Description:	<i>events leading up to it; if a weapon was involved, who else was present</i>
Outcome:	<i>whether police called; whether trespasser was removed from premises under section 547; whether parents contacted; what happened after the incident; any legal action</i>
Other information:	<i>Possible contributory factors; previous incidents involving individuals (give brief details); preventative measures taken previously to avoid such incidents (what, were they effective); actions to be taken now</i>
Police contact:	<i>officer name, incident number</i>

Signed:	
Date:	

Witness Statement	
I (insert name) of (professional address) am a member of staff/parent/ child. On the (insert date) witnessed the following incident.	
<i>Details of incident.</i>	
Signed:	
Date:	

Appendix 2 – Warning letter (sent by Headteacher)

Date

Unacceptable Conduct Warning

Dear

At Hanham Primary Federation our values are that we be safe, be ready and be respectful and ask that all members of our school family act within these parameters and show respect towards one another at all times. We strive to make our school a place where, as adults, we model for our children the behaviour we teach and expect and place a high importance on good manners, empathetic communication and mutual respect.

I have received a report about your conduct at the school on (enter date and time). (Add factual summary of the incident and of its effect on staff, children and parents/carers). This appears to fall far short of that we would expect of an adult at Hanham Primary Federation.

I must inform you that behaviour of this nature will not be tolerated and the school will act to protect its staff and children from any form of abuse or intimidation. I should warn you that any future conduct of this nature could result in the school imposing conditions restricting your access to the school or banning you from contacting or attending the school altogether. On this occasion, I have decided not to ban you from the school premises however as headteacher I have the legal authority to do so. Once banned from the school premises if you were to enter the premises, you would be trespassing. Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 provides that if someone trespassing onto school premises causes a nuisance or disturbance upon them, they may be prosecuted and, if found guilty, the trespasser could be fined up to £500.

I wish to give you an opportunity to provide in writing to hanhamabbots@hanhamprimaryfederation.org or samuelwhites@hanhamprimaryfederation.org marked FAO: Mrs Howells with any comments or observations of your own in relation to the report which I have received about your conduct. Please do so within 10 working days from the date of this letter. These comments may be to challenge or explain the facts of the incident, to express regret and give assurances about your future good conduct. (There is then an option for us to meet to discuss the situation and how it can be avoided in the future).

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher
cc: Chair of Governors

Appendix 3 – Letter imposing conditions on contact with school (sent by Headteacher)

Date

Conditions on Contact with School

Dear

At Hanham Primary Federation our values are that we be safe, be ready and be respectful and ask that all members of our school family act within these parameters and show respect towards one another at all times. We strive to make our school a place where, as adults, we model for our children the behaviour we teach and expect and place a high importance on good manners, empathetic communication and mutual respect.

I have received a report about your conduct at the school on (enter date and time). (Add factual summary of the incident and of its effect on staff, children and parents/carers). This appears to fall far short of that we would expect of an adult at Hanham Primary Federation.

(You will recollect that I have already written to you about a previous incident on (date) warning you of the consequence of any further unacceptable behaviour on your part).

It is unacceptable to expect members of the school team to face this level of aggression in their place of work and I must inform you that conduct of this nature on the school premises will not be tolerated at Hanham Primary Federation.

I am therefore writing to inform you that I am imposing conditions on the contact you may have with school. These are as follows: (insert as appropriate)

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The restrictions above are provisional until they have been reviewed following your right to reply. You may, if you wish, send in writing any comments or observations of your own within 10 working days of the date of this letter to hanhamabbots@hanhamprimaryfederation.org or samuelwhites@hanhamprimaryfederation.org marked FAO: Mrs Howells. These comments may be to challenge or explain the facts of the incident, to express regret and give assurances about your future good conduct. Please consider the above restrictions to be in force temporarily until this information has been received and reviewed. You will be notified in writing of my final decision.

Whilst not our preferred method of engagement with families, I hope that this measure will promote a calmer and more solution-focused exchange between yourself and the school in order to best support xxxxx. Please direct any emails to hanhamabbots@hanhamprimaryfederation.org or samuelwhites@hanhamprimaryfederation.org marked FAO: with the name of the team member required.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

cc: Chair of Governors

Appendix 4 – Letter confirming outcome of review of conditions on contact with school (sent by Headteacher)

Date

Outcome of Review into Conditions on Contact with School

Dear

I wrote to you on (date) to detail concerns about an incident when your behaviour towards (name) fell short of what we would expect at Hanham Primary Federation.

I have not received a written response from you/I have received a letter from you dated xxx. In the circumstances, and after thorough consideration of your letter, I have determined that the decision to impose conditions on your contact with school should be maintained/extended. The conditions are as follows:

- (Copy conditions from initial letter)

These conditions will be removed on xxxxx.

OR These conditions will be reviewed by the Governing Board in approximately six months' time. The Clerk to the Governors will write to you in advance of the review meeting to ask you to provide a written statement for consideration. When deciding whether it will be necessary to extend the application of the above conditions, consideration will be given to the extent of your compliance with the decision, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct and any evidence of your co-operation with the school in other respects.

OR

In the circumstances, and after consideration of your letter, I have determined that the decision to impose conditions on your contact with school should be revoked. You may hence forward attend school events/contact school as normal. However, should there be a repeat of unacceptable behaviour on the school site, the above sanctions may be re-applied.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher
cc: Chair of Governors

Appendix 5 – Letter imposing a ban from school site (sent by Headteacher)

Date

Ban from School Site

Dear

I am writing to you to set out my concerns about your behaviour at school on (date and time). (Add summary of incident and its effect on staff and children).

You will recollect that I have already written to you about a previous incident on (date) warning you of the consequence of any further unacceptable behaviour on your part.

I would like to make it very clear to you that abuse (verbal or physical) of any kind is totally unacceptable and will not be tolerated against any members of our school family. As a result of the serious nature of the incident, I have taken the decision to ban you from the school premises with immediate effect. You are no longer entitled to attend the premises of Hanham Primary Federation until XX.

(If a parent of a KS1 child, set out arrangements for child's drop off and collection at school).

The withdrawal of permission for you to enter the school premises takes effect immediately. However, I am required to consider whether it is appropriate to confirm this decision and consider the length of time you are barred from the premises. Before doing so, you will be given the opportunity to provide, in writing via email to hanhamabbots@hanhamprimaryfederation.org or samuelwhites@hanhamprimaryfederation.org marked FAO: Mrs Howells, any comments which may include any expressions of regret on your part and any assurances you are prepared to give about your future good conduct within 10 working days of the date of this letter. I will review this information and confirm my decision to you in writing.

Please note that you should not enter Hanham Primary Federation until xxxx. All communication should take place by telephone, email or letter.

If you fail to comply with this ban, you could be committing an offence under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996. Once banned from the school, if you were to enter the premises or school grounds you would be trespassing. Section 547 of the Education Act 1996 provides that if someone trespassing onto school premises, causes a nuisance or disturbance upon them, they may be prosecuted and, if found guilty, the trespasser could be fined up to £500.

(If there is a further incident of this nature, I will contact the police to ensure the safety of staff and children).

Yours sincerely,
Head Teacher
cc: Chair of Governors

Appendix 6 – Letter confirming outcome of review into ban from school site (sent by Headteacher)

Date

Outcome of Review into School Site Ban

Dear

I wrote to you on (date) to detail concerns about an incident when your behaviour towards (name) fell short of what we would expect at Hanham Primary Federation.

I have not received a written response from you/I have received a letter from you dated xxx. In the circumstances, and after thorough consideration of your letter, I have determined that the decision to impose a ban on you should be maintained/extended.

This means you may not attend school/you must not/must only make contact with any member of staff by telephone or e-mail.

These conditions will be removed on xxxxx

OR This decision will be reviewed in six months' time by the Governing Board. The Clerk to the Governors will write to you in advance of the review meeting to ask you to provide a written statement for consideration. When deciding whether it will be necessary to extend the application of conditions to attend school premises, consideration will be given to the extent of your compliance with the decision, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct and any evidence of your co-operation with the school in other respects.

OR

In the circumstances, and after consideration of your letter, I have determined that the decision to impose a ban should be revoked. You may hence attend school events as normal. However, should there be a repeat of unacceptable behaviour on the school site, the above sanctions may be re-applied.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher
cc: Chair of Governors

Appendix 7 - Letter from Clerk to the Governors requesting statement for review by Governing Board (sent by Clerk to Governors)

Date

Request for Statement for Governor Review

Dear

The Headteacher wrote to you on (date) to detail concerns that your behaviour towards school staff/ children fell short of what we would expect at Hanham Primary Federation. As a result of this incident, conditions were imposed on you/a ban was imposed.

This decision will be reviewed by the Governing Board at their next meeting on (date).

I am writing to ask whether you would like to make a written statement to governors for their consideration in making the decision on whether to remove the restriction or extend it.

If you should wish to make a written statement, please send to me via email to hanhamabbots@hanhamprimaryfederation.org or samuelwhites@hanhamprimaryfederation.org marked FAO: and the appropriate member of staff.

Yours sincerely,

Clerk to Governors

cc: Headteacher

cc: Chair of Governors

Appendix 8 - Letter detailing outcome of Governing Board's review (sent by Clerk to Governors)

Date

Outcome of Governing Board's Review

Dear

I wrote to you on (date) to request a statement to enable governors to review the school's decision to impose conditions/ban you from attending the school site.

I have not received a written response from you/I have received a letter from you dated xxx, the contents of which were considered carefully by the governors at their meeting on (date).

In the circumstances, and after further consideration of the Headteacher's report and your letter, governors have determined that the decision to impose conditions/ban you from attending or contacting school staff should be confirmed. The conditions of your attendance on site are as follows:

- (Copy conditions from initial letter)

This decision will be reviewed again in six months' time. When deciding whether it will be necessary to extend the application of conditions to attend the school premises, consideration will be given to the extent of your compliance with the decision, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct and any evidence of your co-operation with the school in other respects.

OR

In the circumstances, and after further consideration of the Headteacher's report and your letter, governors have determined that you should once again be allowed to attend school events as usual. All conditions have been removed. However, should there be a repeat of unacceptable behaviour towards staff, the conditions may be re-applied.

Yours sincerely,

Clerk to Governors

cc: Headteacher

cc: Chair of Governors